

Timothy and Mary Richard, Chinese Music, and the Adaptation of Tonic Sol-Fa Method in Qing China

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In an investigation of Christian missionaries and the creation of Christian hymnody in the Pacific Islands, Amy K. Stillman has stressed the importance of "coexistence and absorption" and pointed out the "differences in teaching strategies and hymnal printing" among missionaries. She writes:

> In many, if not most, areas, islanders surpassed simply learning to sing the introduced hymn tunes. Indigenised idioms began to emerge by the late nineteenth century, in which introduced musical materials - including scales, harmonisation, and rhythms- were combined with features from indigenous musical traditions; in many cases these idioms came to coexist with, rather than replace, the introduced hymn tune repertory.[1]

This is by no means unique to the Pacific Islands. Several scholars have discussed the ways in which Christian missionaries appropriated native musical traditions all over the world in order to propagate the Christian doctrines.[2] This is just as true of the situation in China.

[1] Amy K. Stillman, "Prelude to a Comparative Investigation of Protestant Hymnody in Polynesia," Yearbook for Traditional Music 25 (1993): 89.

[2] See Henry Weman, African Music and the Church in Africa (Uppsala: Svenska Institutet fûr Missionsforskning, 1960); A. M. Jones, African Hymnody in Christian Worship (Gwelo, Rhodesia: Mambo Press, 1976); Vida Chenoweth, "Spare Them Western Music!" Evangelical Missions Quarterly 20.1 (January 1984): 30-5; Jean and John Comaroff, Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa, Vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991).

As will be demonstrated in the following, the dissemination of Western music through the medium of the Protestant hymn was not a one-way process with a linear trajectory. Musical exchange in this case was neither unilateral, nor systematic, but a complex process of mutual learning, adaptation and absorption.

To illustrate this point, I shall make a detailed case study of the musical work of a Protestant couple: the Rev. Timothy Richard 李提摩太 (1845-1919) and his first wife, Mary Martin 李提摩太夫人 (1843-1903), with special reference to their music teaching manual, *Xiao shipu* 小詩譜 (Tune-book in Chinese Notation).[3]

1. Timothy Richard and the Tonic Sol-fa Method

Of the influential Christian missionaries based in China during the nineteenth century, the British Baptist Timothy Richard stood out, arguably, as the one with the most profound interest in Chinese music.[4] He and his first wife, Mary, were not only instrumental in the introduction of the Tonic Sol-fa method into Shandong 山東 in the mid-1870s but also responsible for the production of the earliest music teaching manual in Chinese *gongche* 工尺 notation. Moreover, the Richards were among the earliest Protestant missionaries to have made serious study of China's musical tradition.

The importance of music in Timothy Richard's evangelistic work was evident even before he met his musically gifted wife in 1878. Like most missionaries at the time, Timothy Richard began his career in the early 1870s by open-air preaching and passing out religious tracts in Chefoo 芝罘 and other places in Shandong.[5] But he was frustrated by the fact that his efforts were not resulting in anything "worth mentioning."[6] After much soul searching he concluded that this failure was caused by as much methodological flaws as by the irrelevance of his message to the Chinese situation. One of the adjustments he made was to adapt the Christian messages to the Chinese environment through hymn singing. The little hymn-book

[3] I am aware, of course, that to focus on individual cases may be somewhat misleading, because it might be deemed unrepresentative, but I feel that to do so will allow me to raise some specific questions that do, I think, pertain to the larger project.

[4] As a measure of his importance in the history of the Protestant movement in China and of modern China, Timothy Richard has long been the subject of intense scholarly study. As far as I am aware, Paul A. Cohen's "Missionary Approaches: Hudson Taylor and Timothy Richard," in Papers on China, No. 11 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 29-62, was the earliest article on Richard. In 1972, Paul Bohr published *Famine in China and the Missionary: Timothy Richard as Relief Administrator and Advocate of National Reform, 1876-1884* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972). For more recent treatment of Richard, see Andrew T. Kaiser, "Encountering China: The Evolution of Timothy Richard's Missionary Thought (1870-1891)" (PhD Thesis, The University of Edinburgh, 2014). There is also a large body of writings on Richard in Chinese. Among the most influential are: Jiang Wenhan 江文漢, "Li Timotai he Guangxuehui" 李提摩太和廣學會 (Timothy Richard and the Christian Literary Society for China) in *Wenshi ziliao xuanji* 文史資料選輯 (Selected Sources in Literature and History) 43 (March 1964); Gu Changsheng 顧長聲, *Chuanjiaoshi yu jindai Zhongguo* 傳教士與近代中國 (Missionaries and Modern China) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1991), pp. 158-9, 163-8, 175-86, 289-93 and 338-39.

[5] Bohr, *Famine in China and the Missionary*, p. 5. See also Richard Glover, "China" in John Brown Myers ed., *The Century Volume of the Baptist Missionary Society*, 1792-1892 (London: The Baptist Missionary Society, 1892), pp. 116-18.

[6] Timothy Richard, *Forty-Five Years in China* (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd, 1916), p. 48.

he compiled comprised "about thirty hymns." These hymns were "chosen because they appealed to the conscience of the non-Christian as soon as he heard them."[7] In order to maximise the impact on his intended audience, Richard took pains to make sure that his hymnal "excluded those which needed explanation, or otherwise were unattractive or repelled the reader."[8]

Apart from paying attention to the lyrics of the hymns, Timothy Richard also paid attention to the effect of music in his Christian enterprise. His timetable in Qingzhou 青州 from the summer of 1876 to the spring of 1877 indicated that each day he spent more than an hour "teaching Sol-fa music" to Chinese orphans rescued from famine.[9]

Richard's choice of the Tonic Sol-fa system was not accidental. It reflected as much his British background as his missionary pragmatism. Developed in England by John Curwen (1816-1880), a non-Conformist minister and a gifted teacher in the mid-nineteenth century, the Tonic Sol-fa method was "one of the few alternative forms of notation to achieve international use in modern times."[10] It "used the solmisation syllables *doh, ray, me, fah, soh, lah* and *te*."[11] Like the seven-shape note system, it was based on the "Movable *Do*" principle, that is, the tonic of any given major key was always given as *do*. This method proved to be particularly effective for community singing and was extremely popular among the late nineteenth-century urban music teachers in England and, to a lesser extent, the United States.

Timothy Richard first learned music in the Tonic Sol-fa notation at the age of fifteen when attending middle school in rural Wales. "Through his instrumentality the new method became established in the district of Ffaldybrenin."[12] During his years (1865-9) at Haverfordwest Theological College, he actively promoted the notational system, introducing it "to the college, and to the Baptist Church and other Churches in Pembrokeshire."[13] Later when he began his missionary activities in Shangdong, "he reduced to this form the notes of many a Chinese song, sending the tunes over to the late Mr. John Curwen for publication in the Tonic Sol-fa Reporter."[14]

Timothy Richard's enthusiasm for the Tonic Sol-fa system was not surprising. First, the rise of the Tonic Sol-fa method was closely connected to "an evangelical ministry and available to many through the Sunday schools."[15] In other words, the Tonic Sol-fa system owes its very existence to the drive to improve congregational singing on the part of Christian ministry.[16] Second, pedagogically speaking, the Tonic Sol-fa method was best suited for beginners, as it offers "distinct advantages when employed purely as an ancillary device in the early stages of

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7 B. Reeve, *Timothy Richard* (London: S. W. Partridge and Col, 1912), p. 40.

8 Reeve, *Timothy Richard*, p. 40.

9 Richard, *Forty-Five Years in China*, p. 110.

10 Bernarr Rainbow, "Tonic Sol-fa," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 2nd ed (London and New York: Macmillan Publishing, 2001), p. 603. For information on Curwen, see Bernarr Rainbow, *John Curwen: A Short Biography* (Kent: Novello, 1980).

11 Jane Southcott, "Daniel Batchellor and the American Tonic Sol-fa Movement," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 43. 1 (1995): 61.

12 Reeve, *Timothy Richard*, p. 24.

13 Richard, *Forty-Five Years in China*, pp. 22-23, 25.

14 Reeve, *Timothy Richard*, p. 24.

15 Southcott, "Daniel Batchellor and the American Tonic Sol-fa Movement," p. 61.

16 See Rainbow, "Tonic Sol-fa," p. 603.

learning to read from notes."[17] Third, the method, relying mainly upon aural perception of relative pitch and hand signals, not such costly instruments as pianos or organs, was best suited for missionaries working in an environment where teaching equipment might be hard to come by. Given the primitive conditions of most mission stations at the time, this inexpensive way of teaching congregational singing is a particularly important consideration. In the context of famine-stricken Qingzhou, Timothy Richard could just pattern everything with his own voice without having to have an organ or a piano. And finally, in contrast to the "Fixed *Do*" concept, the Tonic Sol-fa system teaches students "to place notes by their relative position within a key, not by their absolute pitch or by reliance on a given musical pattern."[18] This system, by virtue of its similarity to several forms of Chinese indigenous notation, is particularly effective in teaching students who are not used to singing tempered scales.

Timothy Richard was not the first missionary interested in the Tonic Sol-fa system.[19] Nor was Richard the last person to make use of it in missionary work. The Rev. Charles S. Champness of the Wesleyan Mission in Hunan stated in 1909 that he had "always found the tonic Sol-fa method of the greatest use" and recommended Curwen's *The Standard Course of Lessons on the Tonic Sol-fa Method of Teaching to Sing* as the best text-book "for those unacquainted with this method of teaching singing" to study.[20] Like Richard, Champness himself had been "for many years" working hard at teaching singing to Chinese school children, using the Tonic sol-fa method."[21]

Evidence of the missionary promotion of the Tonic Sol-fa method can also be found in published tune books. In the preface to *Songzhu shige* 頌主詩歌 (Blodget and Goodrich Hymnal, 1895), for instance, the Rev. Elwood Gardner Tewksbury 都春圃 (1865-1945), a Harvard graduate who for a time was responsible for the musical programmes taught at the Tongzhou College 通州潞河書院, endorsed the use of the Tonic Sol-fa method by providing a succinct primer of the system.

2. Mary Richard and the Teaching of the Tonic Sol-fa Method in Shanxi

Like her husband, Mary Richard was also convinced of the Tonic Sol-fa method as an effective means in enhancing Christian worship and did her best to put her knowledge of the system into practice. Like John Curwen, who "emphasised the importance of training teachers in the system and devised a series of qualifications that could be completed through classes,"[22] Mary Richard was attentive to matters concerning teacher training. While in Taiyuan in the early 1880s, for example, she held "a class on Wednesday evenings, teaching Sol-fa to those of our

[17] Rainbow, "Tonic Sol-fa," p. 603.

[18] Southcott, "Daniel Batchellor and the American Tonic Sol-fa Movement," p. 61.

[19] The earliest mention of Tonic Sol-fa teaching to the Chinese was in 1862 when a correspondent associated with the missionary work of James Legge of the London Missionary Society in Hong Kong described the progress made using Tonic Sol-fa by a class of 20-30 Chinese converts. See Robin Stevens, "Tonic Sol-Fa in Asia-Pacific Countries: The Missionary Legacy, *Asia-Pacific Journal for Arts Education* 5 1 (2007): 52-76.

[20] Charles S. Champness, "What the Missionary Can Do for Church Music in China," *Chinese Recorder* 40 (1909): 189.

[21] Charles S. Champness, "Music in China," *Chinese Recorder* 48 (August 1917): 495-96.

[22] Southcott, "Daniel Batchellor and the American Tonic Sol-fa Movement," p. 61.

friends [Chinese scholar-officials] who wished to learn to read music."[23]



Fig 1: Timothy Richard and His Family (Scource: China Mission History Archive)[24]

3. The Richards and the Discovery of the *Gongche* Notation

The choice of how to modify one's own cultural norms for the sake of a utilitarian objective and the process by which it is carried out can be viewed as one of cultural learning framed by a give-and-take relationship between cultures. Timothy and Mary Richard's appropriation of the native *gongche* 工尺 notation is a case in point.

Before the advent of the Western five-line staff notation (*wuxian pu* 五綫譜) and cipher, or number notation (*jianpu* 簡譜), there were three main types of notational methods in Chinese music: tablature (*shoufapu* 手法譜), pitched notation (*yinfupu* 音符譜), and graphic (*gexianpu* 格綫譜) notation.[25] The most popular and certainly the most widely used is the pitched gongche notation, which has been in wide use in China for vocal, wind and percussion music since the Song dynasty. Differing from the Western five-line notation, the *gongche* method was designed primarily as a memory aid, not as a pedagogical means. Its main function was to preserve or document.[26] Because the exact meaning of its symbols "for melodic embellishments,

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[23] Richard, *Forty-Five Years in China*, p. 152.

[24] https://cicarchiveprototype.wordpress.com/digital-archive/protestant/baptist/imp-yds-rg008-325-0001-0042/. Accessed: 20 July 2017.

[25] Mingyue Liang, *Music of the Billion* (New York: Heinrichshofen Edition, 1985), p. 186. For more information on these types of pitched notation, see *Zhongguo yinyue cidian* 中國音樂辞典 (Dictionary of Chinese Music) (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1984), pp. 98-99, 119-120, 123 and 256.

[26] Liang, *Music of the Billion*, pp. 177-8, 186.

pauses, prolongation, and so forth needs interpretation,”[27] a teacher was required to ensure the successful transmission of a musical piece written in this system. Despite these shortcomings, the *gongche* notation, however, struck some missionaries as “a very respectable system of writing music – one which compares quite well with that used by the Greeks.”[28]

The Rev. William E. Soothill 蘇慧廉 (1861-1935), a biographer of Timothy Richard and an advocate of making use of China's indigenous musical traditions, explained the gongche system as containing the following common symbols:

合	Corresponding to our key-note major, say C.	
四	,,	to our major second D.
乙	,,	to our major third E.
上	,,	to our major fourth F.
尺	,,	to our major fifth G.
工	,,	to our major sixth A.
凡	,,	to our major seventh B.
六	,,	to our major eighth, otherwise octave C.
五	,,	to our major ninth, otherwise octave D.[29]

The Richards' understanding of the *gongche* system and its origins can be seen from the following passage:

In the Sung [Song] dynasty (960-1126) the notation known as 工尺, equivalent to our sol-fa notation, had become common. It has the 7 notes with semitones between 3rd and 4th and 7th and 8th. This scale came from the Northern Liao dynasty, a race related to the Mongols and Manchus. This was a little before Guido (who died 1050) invented the stave and introduced the use of the syllables *ut re mi fa so la*; these being the 1st syllables of a 6 lined Hymn to John the Baptist. The *ut* was afterwards changed to the more open syllable *do*. Not till 1600 odd was the 7th name added by a Frenchman called Lemaire, who called it *si*.[30]

Similar to the Tonic Sol-fa method, the *gongche* notational system was based on the principle of solmisation. This was, perhaps, one of the reasons why, of all forms of indigenous notational systems, the Richards were attracted to the *gongche* notation:

I was told by the Confucianists that their religion was largely explained in a famous work of the Sung [Song] Dynasty, about a thousand years ago, ‘Li yo’ [*li yue* 禮樂] (which might be translated ‘Ritual Rites and Music’).[31] It was when studying the musical part of this that I came across the

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[27] Liang, Music of the Billion, p. 189.

[28] Edward Syle, “On the Musical Notation of the Chinese,” *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1. 2 (May 1859): 177. For an in-depth study of China missionaries and the gongche notation, see Gong Hongyu 宫宏宇, “Jidujiao chuanjiaosh yu gongche pu” 基督教传教士与工尺谱 (Christian missionaries and the *gongche* notation”, *Yinyue tansuo* (Explorations in Music), No. 1 (2013): 31-40.

[29] William E. Soothill, “Chinese Music and Its Relation to Our Native Services,” *Chinese Recorder* 21 (1890): 223.

[30] Mrs. Timothy Richard, “Chinese Music,” *Chinese Recorder* 21 (July 1890): 311. Cf. Mrs. Timothy Richard, *Paper on Chinese Music*, pp. 8-9.

[31] There are two works by Song authors with the words *Li Yue* 禮樂. One is attributed to Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-1077), which has the exact title, and the other, named slightly different, *Li Yue lun* 禮樂論 by Wang Anshi 王安石 (1121-1086). See Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan yinyue yanjiusuo 中國藝術研究院音樂研究所 ed., *Zhongguo yinyue shupu zhi*, 中國音樂書谱志 (A Bibliography of Books

Chinese Tonic Sol-fa system similar to that which Europeans had fondly imagined to be the latest product of the nineteenth century. It was fully known in China so long ago.[32]

The above passage also indicates that their knowledge of the *gongche* system derived mainly from such authentic musical sources of the Song, mostly likely from Chen Yang 陳暘's *Yueshu* 樂書 (Treatise on Music) or the *Yuezhi* 樂志 (Monograph on Music) in the *Song shi* 宋史 (History of the Song).[33]

4. The Richards, *Xiao shipu* (Tune-Book in Chinese Notation) and the Appropriation of Chinese Musical Materials

Once convinced of the usefulness and practicality of the *gongche* system in teaching the Chinese to sing the praise of the Lord, the Richards abandoned the Sol-fa system and began to use it in their missionary work in Shanxi. Whereas "previous to 1883," to use Mary Richard's own words, the Richards "had used Curwen's Tonic Sol-fa system in teaching the Chinese to sing,"[34] the years after 1883 saw their concentrating on the application of the *gongche* notation in their work. This shift is illustrated nowhere more clearly than in a music teaching manual entitled *Xiao shipu* 小詩譜 (original English title: Tune-Book in Chinese Notation) (Figures 2-4).

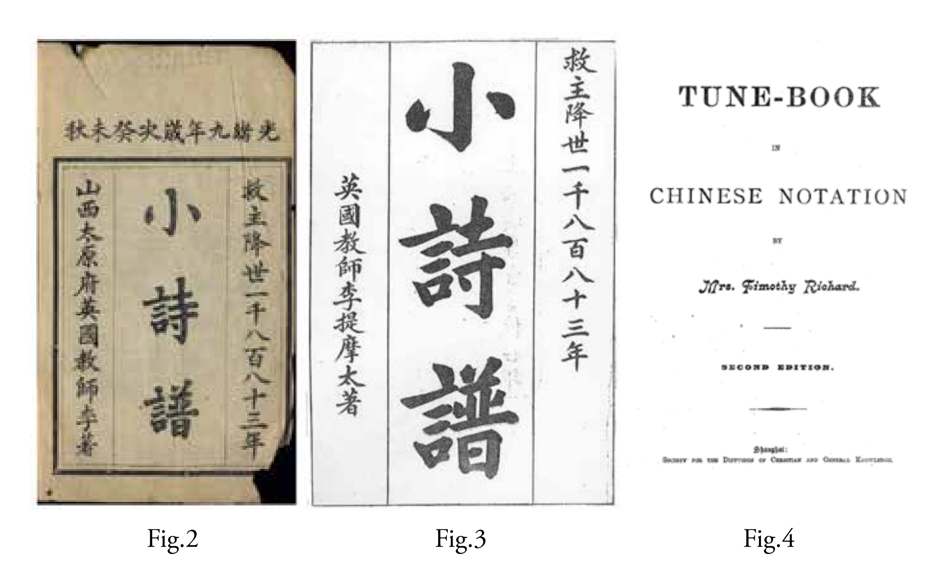


Fig.2 Fig.3 Fig.4

First published in 1883, Xiao shipu, or Tune-book in Chinese Notation, was a progressively arranged musical textbook or "a song primer" intended for "mission schools, Sunday schools,

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and Scores Published in China) (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1981), p. 3. Here Richard was probably referring to the former. Musical sources of the Song dynasty has been thoroughly examined by Rulan Chao Pian in her book *Song Dynasty Musical Sources and Their Interpretation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).

32 Richard, *Forty-Five Years in China*, p. 168.

33 For more details about Chen Yang and the *Yueshu*, see Rulan Chao Pian, *Song Dynasty Musical Sources and Their Interpretation*, pp. 4, 15, 45n, 89.

34 "Preface," in Mary Richard, *Tune-Book in Chinese Notation*, 2nd edition (Shanghai: Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge, 1901).

and native congregations."[35] It was organised under five main headings: "Directions to the Reader (*fanli* 凡例)", "Methods of Teaching (*jiaofa* 教法)", "Methods of Assessments" (*kaofa*考法), "Exercises" (*ke* 課), and "Tunes" (*diao* 調). On the whole, the contents of *Xiao shipu* are a combination of theoretical explanation and practical exercises.

The use of the term "tune-book" as its original English title betrays a connection between this teaching manual and contemporary Western practice in music teaching. The term "tune books," as defined by Allen P. Britton, an authority on the history of American music education, denotes "collections of unaccompanied three- and four-part choral music for use in churches."[36] As a designation, it has been in use ever since the early 1720s, when John Tufts' textbook *An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm Tunes in a Plain and Easy Method* appeared in Boston in 1721. The most salient feature of this type of books is their greater attention to church tunes.[37] The diao or "tunes" section of the *Xiao shipu* contains seventy tunes, of which an overwhelming majority (90% of the total) were hymns commonly used in the Protestant Churches throughout the world, deriving particularly from British sacred choral music of the previous one or two generations. Also in the diao section fourteen antiphons (*yingda diao* 應答調) and a collection of five harmonised songs (*shuban diao* 數班調) in two or four-part harmony in a variety of meters and keys are found. As far as tunes of foreign origins are concerned there is a greater use of the major and minor scales. Rhythmic patterns are characterised by a slow tempo, even beat, and regularity of phrases, and lack of strong pulse. Harmonic arrangements are based almost solely on I, IV and V progression. Without exception, all of the melodies are characterised by their narrow tonal ranges spanning within an octave or less in each line with the highest notes often occurring in the third line of the strophe. In an attempt to provide variety, Richard included several national anthems, African American Jubilee Airs (*huan'ge* 歡歌), and a "Dervish Air" as well as "other pieces for choirs."[38] On the whole, however, the musical idiom of the *Xiao shipu*, compared with that expressed in early American tune-books, lacks the spirit of innovation. Given the Richards' nationality and their educational background, it is hardly surprising that the Xiao shipu manifests more affinity with the British tradition of sacred choral music than the American tune-books tradition.[39]

But unlike most of the tune-books published in China in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the tunes in *Xiao shipu* are written neither in the ordinary Western staff notation nor the Tonic Sol-fa system but in the Chinese gongche notation. Given that the Richards' believed that the missionaries were in China to convert, elevate, and transform the Chinese, and to show that Christian civilization had an "advantage over Chinese civilization,"[40] their

[35] *Chinese Recorder* 16 (June 1885): 232.

[36] Allen P. Britton, "The Musical Idiom in Early American Tunebooks," *Journal of American Musicological Society* 3 (Fall 1950): 286.

[37] Allen P. Britton, "Music in Early American Public Education: A Historical Critique," in Nelson B. Henry ed., *Basic Concepts in Music Education: The Fifty-Seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), Part I, p. 200.

[38] *Chinese Recorder* 16 (June 1885): 232.

[39] For a brief description of the main characteristics of the modern English hymn, see Nicholas Temperley, "Hymn," in Stanley Sadie ed., The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. 12, pp. 31-4.

[40] Richard, *Forty-Five Years in China*, p. 158.

appropriation of Chinese indigenous cultural forms deserves some attention.

Writing in 1880, Timothy Richard commented on Chinese music and the inappropriateness of using Western tunes indiscriminately in the evangelical enterprise:

> The Chinese cultivate sacred music but little. Still what they have will suit the Chinese far better than most of our foreign tunes, which are taught, not because of any special fitness in them for the Chinese be it remembered, but because they are the most familiar to us.[41]

Clearly Timothy and Mary Richard's adoption of the indigenous *gongche* system was a result of their conviction that a wholesale transfer of Western culture was not possible and, for the sake of effective preaching the Gospel, cultural accommodation was needed. "The fact that the music is written in the characters so perfectly familiar to his eye from childhood," as stated in a contemporary brief mention of books in the June 1885 issue of *The Chinese Recorder*, probably by Richard himself, "would prove a great encouragement to every native to begin its study."[42] The Richards' adoption of the *gongche* notation was not a random act but had much to do with their missionary pragmatism. To them, the primary value of the *gongche* notation lies in the fact that it was "native" and of easier attainment by their Chinese converts.[43] "The 工尺 has the advantage of being already universally known over the [Chinese] empire," wrote Mary Richard in 1890,[44] and therefore would be more accessible to the Chinese masses.

Choosing to use the *gongche* notation rather than the Tonic Sol-fa method in their evangelical work after 1883 does not mean the Richards were unaware of some of the inherent defects of the former, however. The first defect Mary Richard identified pertains to the way in which semitones were notated:

> Although the Chinese have been from 9 to 10 centuries before us with their sol-fa system, they have not yet in that system a complete scale of 12 semitones. In fact they have only one accidental – the sharpened 4th, called Keu [*gou* 勾], which was added to the new scale to make it correspond more to their previous scale, in which the sharpened 4th was a very special feature, so modern missionaries have had to add the others to make it complete.[45]

The second defect concerns the way in which time is marked in the gongche notation:

> The chief time marks in common use by the Chinese are two- a cross, thus X (called *pan* [*ban* 板]) and a circle, thus ○ (called *yen* [*yan* 眼]) – the first put at side of the accented and the second at side of the unaccented note, equivalent really to the beats in our bars. If they want more than one note to be sung to the one beat, they just crowd in the number of notes to be sung to it at the side of the pan or yen, it may be 2, 3, 4, 5, or even more. The awkwardness of this must be apparent at once.[46]

Mary Richard was not alone in noticing the inadequacy of gongche time marks. Edward W. Syle mentioned this problem as early as February 1858 when he read a paper before the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.[47] J. A. van Aalst in his Chinese Music, first

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41 Timothy Richard, "Thoughts on Chinese Missions: Difficulties and Tactics," *Chinese Recorder* 11 (1880): 436.

42 *Chinese Recorder* 16 (June 1885): 232.

43 M. Richard, "Chinese Music," *Chinese Recorder* 21 (July 1890): 311.

44 M. Richard, "Chinese Music," p. 311.

45 M. Richard, "Chinese Music," p. 311.

46 M. Richard, "Chinese Music," pp. 311-12.

47 Syle, "On the Musical Notation of the Chinese," pp. 177-8.

published in Shanghai in 1884, considered the Chinese way of notating the values of notes as "incontestably the weakest point in Chinese musical notation."[48] W. E. Soothill also admitted the Chinese "have no satisfactory method of expressing time [original italics]."[49]

As zealous missionaries the Richards, unlike Aalst and other Western critics of Chinese music, were less concerned with theoretical speculations or musicological elucidation of Chinese music. They were more concerned with the immediate problem of how to improve this indigenous system so that they could use it in their missionary work. Thus, having reached their diagnosis they embarked on a journey of musical renovation that would combine their knowledge of Western music and their expertise on Chinese musical traditions. Knowing the Tonic sol-fa method as well as they did, the Richards naturally sought to utilise some aspects of the Curwen system to remedy the "imperfections" of the *gongche* method:

> To supplement, therefore, we used Curwen's marks for all divisions of time (½, ¼, and triplet), viz., for half-beat, for quarter-beat, and inverted commas "for triplets. On the other hand, if they want a note to last two or more beats, they crowd in the X ○ at the side of that note. This crowding of *pan* [*ban*] *yen* [*yan*] we have obviated by using Curwen's dash, only made vertically, of course.[50]

Whereas the Richards found remedy for the defective *gongche* time marks in a Western source, their solution for the problem of inconsistency in the *gongche* key signatures was drawn from China's indigenous traditions. Their exploration of other forms of notational systems used in Chinese music led to the discovery of the the *lülüü* notation.

As one of four types of pitched notations, the *lülüü* notation (*lülüü pu* 律呂譜) uses the twelve disyllabic terms for the twelve semitones to denote intervallic relations. These names are as follows:

huangzhong	黄鐘	c	*dalüü*	大吕	d-flat
taicu	太簇	d	*jiazhong*	夹鐘	e-flat
guxian	姑洗	e	*zhonglüü*	仲吕	f

[48] J. A. van Aalst, *Chinese Music* (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1884), p. 18. For a brief study of J. A. van Aalst and the book, see Han Kuo-huang, "Short Contribution: J. A. van Aalst and His *Chinese Music*," *Asian Music* 19. 2 (Spring-Summer 1989): 127-30; Lin Qinghua 林青华, "Qing mo Bilishi ren Alisi de Zhongguo yinyue 清末比利时人阿里嗣的《中国音乐》," *Zhongyang yinyue xueyuan xuebao* 中央音乐学院学报, No. 1 (2003), pp. 76-9.

[49] Soothill, "Chinese Music and Its Relation to Our Native Services," pp, 222-3. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to evaluate Mary Richard's findings on Chinese music. However, the issues she raised are still matters of debate among contemporary theorists of Chinese music. Echoing Richard's criticism, Liu Qi 刘奇, for example, also singles out the defects quoted above as evidence of a lack of scientific precision in the Chinese notational systems in general and, the gongche system in particular (see Liu Qi, "Li Timotai fufu yu *Xiao Shipu* 李提摩太夫妇与《小诗谱》," *Yinyue yanjiu* 音乐研究, No. 1 (1988), p. 27). Arguing from the viewpoint of cultural relativism, other scholars, most of whom are ethnomusicologists or music historians, tend to see these alleged defects as positive features unique to Chinese musical tradition which, free from the rigid constraints of Western staff notation, allow the performer more room for creativity (see See Wu Xiaoping 吴晓萍, "Zhongguo gongchepu de wenhua neihan 中国工尺谱的文化内涵" (The Cultural Meanings of the Chinese Gongche Notation), *Zhongguo yinyue xue* 中国音乐学, No. 1 (2004), pp. 82-9; Huang Xiangpeng, "Ancient Tunes Hidden in Modern Gongche Notation" translated from the Chinese by Joseph S. C. Lam in The 1992 Yearbook for Traditional Music, pp. 8-13).

[50] M. Richard, "Chinese Music," p. 312.

ruibin	蕤宾	f-sharp	*linzhong*	林鐘	g
yize	夷則	a-flat	*nanlüü*	南吕	a
wuyi	無射	b-flat	*yingzhong*	應鐘	b

Instead of using the *lülüü* notation to write music as the Chinese did, Mary Richard combined the twelve disyllabic names with another Chinese musical term *yùn* 均 (lit., key) to serve as key signatures.[51] For example, to indicate the key-notes C, D-flat and D, she used the Chinese words "*huangzhong yun*" 黄鐘均, "*dalüü yun*" 大吕均 and "*taicu yun*" 太簇均.

The Richards' synthesis of Chinese and Western sources can also be seen in the way they used Tonic Sol-fa charts to illustrate various notational systems. Noticing that "the modulator, given in *Yo tien* [*Yuedian* 樂典, Canons of Music] of 1544,[52] is a sufficiently interesting fact in itself" and that "it is precisely the same principle as Curwen's Modulator," Mary Richard designed a number of charts to guide her teaching. For example, the chart *Zhong Xi yinming tu* 中西音名圖 (Comparative Table of Chinese and Western Notations) (Figure 5) aims to help her readers to understand the gongche system as in relation to other commonly used notational methods; *Gongche biao* 工尺表 (Chinese modulator) (Figure 6) gives "the fixed name of the Chinese Key-notes and the 工尺 and sol-fa of Scale C, besides ancient notes";[53] *Biandiao tu* 變調圖 (Signatures of Keys, Eastern and Western) (Figure. 7) provides a table of key signatures; and *Yuejie tu* 樂節圖 (Comparative Table showing Time-marks) (Figure. 8) uses the first four bars of Handel's *Hallelujah* chorus, transcribed in three notations, to illustrate "the comparative time-marks, including rests."[54]



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

[51] For an explanation of the term *yun*, see *Zhongguo yinyue cidian*, p. 489.

[52] M. Richard, "Chinese Music," Chinese Recorder 21 (August 1890): 338. She was probably referring to Huang Zuo's 黄佐 (1490-1566) work by the same title. But according to Rulan Chao Pian, this book was printed in 1682. See Rulan Chao Pian, p. 9, note 42.

[53] M. R., "Correspondence," *Chinese Recorder* 21 (1890): 416.

[54] M. R., "Correspondence," p. 416.



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

In addition to incorporating a Chinese notational system into the *Xiao shipu*, Richard, like Ernest Faber, also appropriated a Confucian rationale for including music in his mission work. In the preface to the 1883 edition of the *Xiao shipu* written in classical Chinese, Timothy Richard began by emphasising the didactic function of music, reiterating the social, ethical and spiritual values of the art:

> Someone may ask me: What is the purpose of writing *Xiao shipu*? My answer is: Ultimate Rites govern the proper behaviours of human beings and perfect music governs the hearts and minds. In antiquity the reason that ancient Sages were able to make the heavenly god feel moved and managed to tame the demons was in no small measure due to their use of the music. This is why music as utility can't be ignored and it has to be propagated. That for years I have been working hard on the subject is not that I wish to seek the small aim of sensual gratification but to achieve [the big objective of] transforming the hearts of the masses and singing the praise of the Lord.[55]

If we omit the very last sentence we could be forgiven for thinking this utterance was from the mouth of Confucius himself or the pen of a Chinese gentleman well versed in the Confucian classics. By using the same arguments, and much of the same language of the Confucian scholar in justifying the teaching of music, Richard made clear his position that musical activity was valuable not because it cultivates the intellect but because it cultivates the personality. Musical studies were associated with the strengthening of moral values and the improvement of social behaviour.

Similarly, Mary Richard revealed elsewhere her agreement with the Confucian emphasis on the social and moral values of music. "Their books also dwell on the elevating effect of good music," she wrote in 1890. "In a book for women, which I read many years ago, mothers are advised to invite good musicians to sing and play to them, so that their minds may be elevated, and that in consequence the minds of their offspring may be elevated."[56]

The Richards also made extensive use of Chinese music in this teaching manual. Twelve

[55] "Xiao shipu xu," in *Xiao shipu*, p. 1b.

[56] M. Richard, "Chinese Music," *Chinese Recorder* 21 (August 1890): 346.

Chinese "airs", such as the instrumental pieces *lao liu ban* 老六板 (old six-beat), which "is the common hack of all learners,"[57] and *pu tian le* 普天樂 (universal happiness),[58] are included in the *ke* 課 or "exercises" section of the *Xiao shipu*.

Apart from appropriating Chinese secular music, the Richards also broke the sectarian barrier by making use of Chinese religious tunes. The *diao* 調 or "tunes" section of the manual, for example, contains two Buddhist chants (Figure 9) and three Buddhist airs. In the 1901 edition of the *Xiao shipu* twenty more Chinese airs were added as an appendix including ten "tunes sung at worship of Confucius, five Confucian chants," one single chant, a Chinese folk song entitled *shi duo hua* 十朵花 (ten flowers), a Confucian air and two unnamed Chinese airs.[59]



Fig.9. A Buddhist tune noted down by Timothy Richard.
From Richard, *Forty-Five Years in China*

5. The Richards and Their Studies of Chinese Music

Apart from writing teaching manuals, the Richards' missionary pragmatism also saw them appropriating elements of Chinese music in their church services:

> We have adapted some airs of Chinese songs, Buddhists' chants and Confucian chants, to be used in Christian worship, vocal and instrumental. In *Tai-yen-fu* [*Taiyuan* 太原], two Sundays in the month, when our evangelists came in for their weeks' study, we had to help in the praise, besides the Mason and Hamlin organ used every Sunday, two flutes and a flat drum, which last kept us most mercilessly up to time.[60]

Timothy and Mary Richard's adoption of the *gongche* notation in their teaching and their appropriation of native tunes in church activity may not have been universally approved of by their fellow missionaries but these actions conflicted with no principle that they held dear. After all, these devices served to bring religious music into the realm of native tastes. In a way, Timothy Richard's serious investigation of the indigenous tradition can be regarded as a by-product of his efforts "to seek the worthy". Above I have mentioned that when Richard first started his missionary career in Shandong in the early 1870s, he adopted a direct approach to evangelism by preaching daily in a street chapel and passing out religious pamphlets. But when his enthusiasm failed to bear any fruit, he began to adopt an approach similar to that of Matteo Ricci, even though he claimed that his inspiration was from Edward Irving (1792-1834).[61] Like the Italian Jesuit, Richard aimed at reaching the Chinese social and political elite through intellectual discussion and the publishing of scholarly writings. Starting in the early 1880s Richard made a serious study of the Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist texts for the purpose of understanding the Chinese mind. His subsequent study of Chinese music and

57 Syle, "On the Musical Notation of the Chinese," p. 177.

58 M. Richard, "Chinese Music," *Chinese Recorder* 21 (August 1890): 341.

59 "Index," in *Xiao shipu*.

60 M. Richard, "Chinese Music," *Chinese Recorder* 21 (August 1890): 346.

61 Bohr, *Famine in China and the Missionary*, p. 7.

appropriation of Buddhist tunes are a partial result of his conscious effort to reach the Chinese ruling classes. The following passage, taken from his reminiscences, not only tells us how he and Mary Richard became interested in Chinese music and the type of Chinese music to which they were exposed, but also demonstrates in an indirect way the link between Richard's effort to seek "the worthy" and his interest in Chinese music:

> In 1882 the new Governor of Shansi [Shanxi], Chang Chihtung [Zhang Zhidong 張之洞], who afterwards became the famous Viceroy, was bent on reviving the Confucian religion in the province. A new temple was built to the honour of Confucius, possessing a complete set of musical instruments of many kinds, the same as are in use in Shantung [Shandong] at the home of Confucius. A man in charge of the temple had the training of a number of Confucian students in the art of music. On him I called one day, and we had a talk, during which he discovered that I knew something of music. On my asking if I might listen to them at their next performance he said, "We will have one now." Forthwith he called on some thirty *Sui-ts'ais* [*xiucai* 秀才] to perform. It was a pitiable display, for although the instruments were many and beautiful and new the man in charge did not know how to tune them, with the result that there ensued a fearful discordant noise, but no music. I asked the principal why he did not put the instruments all in tune. This was a new art to him. He said he wished to know how. I then invited him to my house, saying that my wife understood music very well and she could explain to him. Thus we helped in putting Confucian music on a better footing in Shansi [Shanxi].[62]

In the preface to the 1883 edition of the Xiao shipu, Timothy Richard mentioned that he had previously written a book entitled *Zhong-Xi yuefa zuoyao* 中西樂法撮要 (Essentials of Chinese and Western Music Theory). This book, according to Timothy, contained three parts: music theory, the gongche notation, and a selection of hymn tunes. But because the book was too complicated to be of wider use, he decided to write an abbreviated version.[63] The following brief note published in the June 1885 issue of The Chinese Recorder confirms this:

> *Hsiao Shi Pu* (小詩譜) is the title of a work recently published by Rev. Timothy Richard of Shansi. Mr. Richard is the author of several works on music; and the present "Song Primer," if we may so call it, is the result of a desire to place the work within reach of those who could not perhaps find time to study a more elaborate work.[64]

This indicates clearly that by the early 1880s, Timothy Richard had not only realised the importance of using native musical traditions in his missionary endeavour but also started his effort to indigenise Christian music.

Like her husband, Mary Richard was equally keen to explore the native musical traditions in order to advance the cause of Christianity in China. She was certainly the better known as far as writing on Chinese music is concerned. According to the Rev. William E. Soothill, Mary Richard developed a strong interest in Chinese music while in Taiyuan and consequently started writing "on the subject." Mary Richard's knowledge of Chinese music consisted of not only theory but practical skill as well. In fact, she "learned so much about the native music that she once re-tuned all the instruments used in the nearby Confucian temple."[65]

Here Soothill was not overstating: the event he referred to was also recorded in Timothy

[62] Richard, *Forty-Five Years in China*, pp. 168-169.

[63] "Xiao shipu xu" (Preface to *Xiao shipu*), p. 1.

[64] *Chinese Recorder* 16 (June 1885): 232.

[65] William E. Soothill, *Timothy Richard of China: Seer, Statesman, Missionary and the Most Disinterested Adviser the Chinese Ever Had* (London: Seeley, Service & Co., 1926). p. 127.

Richard's memoir already cited above. Mary Richard herself, however, more than once acknowledged her indebtedness to her husband for inspiring her interest in Chinese music. In a speech to the Literary Society, Tianjin in April 1890 she noted:

> If I am able to throw any light upon the subject of Chinese Music, it is because ten years ago went into the study of the subject, and putting the result of his research into Chinese in a Book on Music in general in 4 vols. The only part I took in it was to put Western exercises and tunes into Chinese notation, to put intelligible time-marks to Chinese airs, and to adapt Chinese chants and airs for use in Christian worships.[66]

At any rate, Mary Richard quickly gained a reputation for her knowledge of Chinese music, becoming a recognised "expert" on Chinese music in foreign circles. A perusal of her work published on the topic confirms this designation.

The earliest evidence concerning her interest in Chinese music appeared in the December 1889 issue of *The Chinese Recorder* in the form of editorial notes. These comprise a few examples of Chinese music in Western staff notation. As these tunes "have been effectively used in Christian work in Shantung [Shandong] and Shansi [Shanxi],"[67] they also provide us with an exact idea of what had been used in her church activity. Her more scholarly article on Chinese music was published in three instalments in the July- September 1890 issues of *The Chinese Recorder*.[68] This work, comprising an introductory survey of the history, theory, instruments, and practice of the musical art in China, became quite influential after being published in an abridged form in such journals as *Leisure Hour*[69] and *East of Asia*.[70] In 1899 the American Presbyterian Mission Press in Shanghai issued her much extended paper as a monograph after she presented it before the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in Shanghai in November 1898. Several reprints were subsequently issued, the last of which in 1930.[71]

Conclusion

Above I have explicated the utilitarian motives behind the missionary involvements in music teaching in China and the appropriation of Chinese musical traditions in the missionary work. There is no question that Christian utilitarianism was the reason for the missionary involvement in the diffusion of Western music in China. Yet we should not dismiss the missionary efforts without consideration of its actual effect. The introduction and dissemination of aspects of Western music in late Qing China were not a simple process of missionary teaching and Chinese acceptance. Rather, it was a complex phenomenon that involved much mutual learning, adaptation and absorption.

The case of Timothy and Mary Richard shows the importance of focusing on the many dialogues, experiments and negotiations which occurred in the process of musical transmission and the importance of understanding the dynamics of arts and practical utility. The case also raises important questions concerning the complex relationships between missionary

[66] M. Richard, "Chinese Music," *Chinese Recorder* 21 (July 1890): 305.

[67] Mary Richard, "Editorial Notes and Missionary News," *Chinese Recorder* 20 (1889): 580-581.

[68] "Chinese Music", *Chinese Recorder* 21 (1890): 305-14; 339-47, 416-19.

[69] "Chinese Music," *Leisure Hour* (1897-1898): 91-4.

[70] "Chinese Music," *East of Asia*, Pt. IV, Vol. I (1902): 301-14

[71] Fredric Lieberman, *Chinese Music: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1979), p. 182.

education and Chinese nationalism.[72] It is generally true that, similar to what happened in the United States in the early days of colonization, music in mission schools and mission stations from the very beginning was conditioned by a deliberate desire on the part of missionaries to suppress indigenous music and to substitute something "better" in its place.[73] But the extensive appropriation of Chinese musical materials in the work of the Richards renders this understanding simplistic. Rather than painting a picture of missionaries imposing their values and practices on their native recipients, Richard's *Xiao shipu* provides a rather clear illustration of musical synthesis and cross-cultural fertilisation. The fact that Timothy and Mary Richard acted not only as agents of Western musical culture but also as learners and propagators of Chinese music complicates the usual understanding of the power relations. In a way their case reveals as much about the teaching of Western music to the Chinese as about how the missionaries responded to the Chinese. More significantly, their experiments in combining foreign forms with indigenous traditions became the opening step in a negotiation between traditional and Western elements that continues to this day.[74]

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[72] David Sheng 盛宣恩 has demonstrated the importance that Christian hymns had in inculcating patriotism among Chinese Christians from very early on. See Sheng, "A Study of the Indigenous Elements in Chinese Christian Hymnody" (D.M.A Thesis, University of Southern California, 1964), pp. 94, 125-28. In a recent study, Ryan Dunch has also demonstrated that Chinese Protestants in the early years of the Republic played a key role in using flags, patriotic hymns and other symbols of the nation to awaken national consciousness among Fuzhou Protestants. See in his *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China, 1857-1927* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), Chapter 4. Chinese Christians and graduates of Christian schools also played an important part in the rise of the mass singing movement in the late 1930s. Liu Liang-mo 劉良模, a mission school graduate and a secretary on the staff of the National Y.M.C.A., was largely responsible for inspiring and organising the mass singing movement in the War of Resistance. Leftist composers such as Mai Xin 麥新, Xian Xinghai 冼星海, and Meng Bo 孟波 were certainly influenced by Liu. After all it was through taking part in the activities organised by Liu's Singing Society of the Masses that they first experienced the power and impact of mass singing in mobilising the public. In his *Imperialism and Chinese Nationalism: Germany in Shantung* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), John Schrecker argues that an important contribution of Western imperialism was its encouragement of the spread of nationalism in the last decades of the Qing (pp. 256-258).

[73] For a study of the beginning of music education in the United States, see Britton, "Music in Early American Public Education: A Historical Critique", p. 200.

[74] For example, Zhao Yuanren 趙元任, a Harvard-trained philosopher and well-known linguist, experimented with harmonising Chinese folk and operatic melodies based on the pentatonic scale and tonal patterns; Huang Zi 黄自, a Yale and Oberlin-trained composer who more than anyone else was responsible for training the first generation of professional Chinese composers, publicly expounded the idea of synthesising Chinese musical materials with Western compositional techniques in order to create a distinctly nationalistic music similar to that of the Russian National School of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and Xian Xinghai 冼星海, who studied with both Vincent D'Indy (1851-1931) and Paul Dukas (1865-1935) at the Paris Conservatory, also expressed similar thoughts in the late 1930s and early 1940s.